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---COLD WEATHER NEWS ALERT---

**President Bush's 2004 Budget Requests \$3.7 Million
for Maine's Low-Income Families**

SOUTH PORTLAND, MAINE – As a deep freeze impacts on many parts of the nation, Department of Energy (DOE) official Doug Faulkner traveled to Maine today on behalf of Secretary of Energy Spencer Abraham to let the citizens of Maine know that weatherization assistance for low income families is readily available to brave cold winters. President Bush's 2004 Budget includes \$3,748,865 in weatherization assistance for Maine to improve the energy efficiency of hundreds of low-income households. Maine's grant will be handled through the Maine State Housing Authority Office of Energy and Housing Services in Augusta.

Faulkner, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary in DOE's Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy, was in South Portland to visit single family home scheduled to be weatherized, along with Laurie Lachance, Maine State Economist for Governor John Baldacci's Office; Representative Larry Bliss, Co-Chair, Maine Energy and Utilities Committee; Michael L. Finnegan, Director, Maine State Housing Authority (MSHA); and Grant Lee, Executive Director, People's Regional Opportunity Program (PROP).

"As temperatures in Maine are falling to sub-zero levels, the funds for weatherization assistance are rising to help low income families," Faulkner said. "President Bush is keeping his commitment to increase weatherization assistance and provide energy-saving home improvements to hundreds of thousands of low-income families this year across the country."

The National Energy Policy made the Weatherization Assistance Program a priority recommending that it be increased by \$1.4 billion over 10 years. President Bush's 2004 Budget includes \$288.2 million for weatherization assistance. This year, weatherization assistance will reduce the energy bills of approximately 126,000 low-income families nationwide – 3000 more than 2003 and a 20 percent increase over 2002.

"At current production rates, weatherization decreases national energy consumption by the equivalent of 15 million barrels of oil every year," Faulkner added. "As we strive to reduce our nation's dependence on foreign oil, the importance of such efforts cannot be overstated."

More information on DOE's programs to improve the energy efficiency of buildings is available on DOE's Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Network website at http://www.eere.energy.gov/buildings/weatherization_assistance/ or by calling 1-800/DOE-3732.